

Application No.: 09/837,911

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Docket No.: 495152000111

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In an Office Action dated March 25, 2005, claims 110-159 were rejected. By this amendment, claims 110, 113, and 142 have been amended, and claims 130-132 and 153-155 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims.

I. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

Claims 113-118 and 131-159 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In particular, independent claims 113 and 142 were rejected as being indefinite because of the reliance of the structure of the claimed apparatus on the substrate to be processed. Claims 113 and 142 have been amended to remove reference to the first and second portions of the substrate.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103**A. Claims 110, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, 123, 126, 127, 129-131, 137, 141-143, 145, 150, 153, and 154**

Claims 110, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, 123, 126, 127, 129-131, 137, 141-143, 145, 150, 153, and 154 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,176,667 (the Fairbairn reference) in view Japanese patent publication 04-311591 (the Hirohiko reference). Claims 130, 131, 153, and 154 have been canceled.

1. Claims 110, 119, 122, 123, 126, 127, and 129

Independent claim 110 has been amended to recite, in part, that the film on the second portion of the substrate surface is plated to the desired thickness after plating the film on the first portion of the substrate surface. Applicant asserts that the Hirohiko reference does not disclose or suggest this claim limitation.

In particular, the Abstract of the Hirohiko reference discloses that the plating solution supplied from each of the columnary space 112 and the cylindrical space 123 is regulated to increase

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from the inside towards the outside of the inner vessel 12. Thus, the film in the Hirohiko reference is plated across the entire surface of the wafer at one time. The Hirohiko reference also does not disclose a motivation to modify this pattern to plate one portion of the surface after plating another portion.

Thus, Applicant asserts that claim 110 is allowable over the combination of the Fairbairn reference and the Hirohiko reference. Additionally, Applicant asserts that claims 119, 122, 123, 126, 127, and 129, which depend from claim 110, are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from an allowable independent claim.

2. Claims 113, 115, 116, 118, 137, 141-143, 145, and 150

Independent claims 113 and 142 have been amended to recite, in part, first and second anodes connected to first and second power supplies, respectively. Independent claims 113 and 142 also recite, in part, that the first and second power supplies alternate in providing power to first and second anodes, respectively. Applicant asserts that the Hirohiko reference does not disclose or suggest this claim limitation.

In particular, figure 1 in the Hirohiko reference depicts electrodes 4 connected to a common power supply 6. Additionally, the Abstract of the Hirohiko references discloses that the plating solution is regulated to increase from the inside towards the outside of the inner vessel 12. Thus, in the Hirohiko reference, power from the power supply 6 is provided to all of the electrodes 4 at the same time to plate the film across the entire surface of the wafer at one time. The Hirohiko reference also does not disclose a motivation to use first and second power supplies that alternate in providing power to first and second anodes, respectively.

Additionally, U.S. Patent No. 3,880,725 (the Van Raalte reference), which was cited by the Examiner in rejecting claims 132 and 155, discloses multiple electrodes 116. However, the Raalte reference does not disclose or suggest first and second anodes connected to first and second power supplies, respectively, or that the first and second power supplies alternate in providing power to the first and second anodes, respectively.

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Similarly, U.S. Patent No. 5,326,455 (the Kubo reference), which was cited by the Examiner in rejecting claims 132 and 155, discloses sub-anodes 14. However, the Kubo reference does not disclose or suggest first and second anodes connected to first and second power supplies, respectively, or that the first and second power supplies alternate in providing power to the first and second anodes, respectively.

Thus, Applicant asserts that independent claims 113 and 142 are allowable. Additionally, Applicant asserts that claims 115, 116, 118, 130, 131, 137, and 141, which depend from claim 113, and claims 143, 145, 150, 153, and 154, which depend from claim 142, are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowable independent claims.

B. Claims 111, 112, 114, 117, 120, 121, 124, 125, 128, 132-136, 138-140, 144, 146-149, 151, 152, 155-159

Claims 132 and 155 have been canceled. Applicant asserts that claims 111, 112, 114, 117, 120, 121, 124, 125, 128, 133-136, 138-140, 144, 146-149, 151, 152, 156-159 are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowable independent claims.

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III. Conclusion

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and/or the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 495152000111. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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